

The Top 10 Rules for Teachers to Remember While Conferring with Writers

10. A conference should be more of a **CONVERSATION** with the student. He or she should talk as much as you do. To facilitate this, sit side by side. The child should hold the work in between the two of you.
9. Your goal for **EVERY** conference should be to teach a strategy or technique that will help **THIS WRITER** improve, rather than one that will just improve this piece of writing.
8. Have the student **READ THE PIECE OR A SECTION OF THE PIECE ALOUD FIRST** (when applicable). Don't look at the words. This will help you **FOCUS ON THE CONTENT** of the piece and not get hung up on conventions.
7. Always begin with something **POSITIVE**. Focus on what the student has done well.
Examples:
 - *I love the way your first sentence hooked me into your story.*
 - *You skipped lines so you could easily add details. That's great.*
 - *I saw you look at the word wall to figure out a word. Good for you.*
 - *I love how you put a lot of information into your picture.*
 - *I like the way you used conversation to let the reader know exactly how you felt. It seemed as if I were right there in the room with you.*
6. Follow these guidelines for the format of the conference:

RESEARCH-observe and discuss the piece with the student. Try to figure out what the child is trying to do as a writer. Consider the audience and purpose.

DECIDE- What strategy will help this writer to improve what he or she is already trying to do? Explicitly state **ONE** strategy or technique that you are going to teach.

TEACH- **ONE** strategy or technique to help this **WRITER**

Examples:

- *Writers sometimes represent a story or an idea in pictures*
- *Writers share markers during writing workshop*
- *Writers sometimes model their writing after great texts*
- *Writers leave spaces between words to make their writing easier to read*

LINK- Ask the student to restate the strategy or technique that you taught and encourage him or her to use it in the future

5. Use **LANGUAGE** that will be helpful to the student. Speak in terms of "writer to writer" or "author to author." Consider what you know and do as a writer. Deliberately monitor the words you choose.
4. **CONNECT** your teaching point to the mini-lesson **ONLY** if that is the strategy or technique the student is already trying to use.
3. Keep some kind of **RECORD** of your teaching points with each student. After the conference, **REFLECT**. Can you state what you taught the writer? Observe the writer and re-evaluate the message you sent. Be sure to revisit the strategy in the future to see if further instruction is necessary.
2. Involve students in a **VARIETY OF CONFERENCES**:
 - One-to-One Conferences (teacher and student)
 - Whole-Class Shares (class observes you in a one-to-one conference)
 - Quick Shares (celebrations)
 - On-the-Run Conferences (1-2 minutes, teach the student something so he or she can quickly move forward)
 - Peer Conferences (groups of students or student to student if grade appropriate)
1. **PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO THE WRITER**. Let the writer know you care and are genuinely interested in him or her both as an individual and as a writer.

References

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